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# Unraveling the origins and artistry of the Brühlsche Allerlei Service

By Maureen Cassidy-Geiger

## Introduction

LEFT: FIG. 1. DOMENICUS VAN DER SMISSEN, PORTRAIT OF HEINRICH COUNT VON BRÜHL, UNDATED. OIL ON CANVAS. (GERMANISCHES NATIONALMUSEUM, NUREMBERG, GM 1670)

RIGHT: FIG. 2. PARTS OF THE BRÜHLSCHE ALLERLEI SERVICE. (SOTHEBYS)

The great Meissen table service known today as the Brühlsche Allerlei, produced for Heinrich, Count von Brühl, largely between 1742 and 1746, seems to have vanished entirely from public notice following the Prime Minister's death on October 28, 1763 (figs. 1 and 2). With the signing of the Treaty of Hubertusburg in February 1763, the court of August III returned to Dresden after spending the war years in Poland. When Brühl died just weeks after the King, in disgrace and in debt, his heirs were forced by the government to liquidate his estate, yielding a comprehensive inventory of the contents of his palaces and gardens in Dresden.[1] The painting collection of six hundred pictures, celebrated in volume one of the never-completed *Recueil d'Estampes gravées d'aprez les tableaux de la Gallerie & du Cabinet de S.E. Mr. le Comte de Brühl* (Dresden, 1754) (fig. 3), was sold *en bloc* to Catherine

II of Russia in 1764, while the library, sculptures, and a part of the natural history collection went to the state.

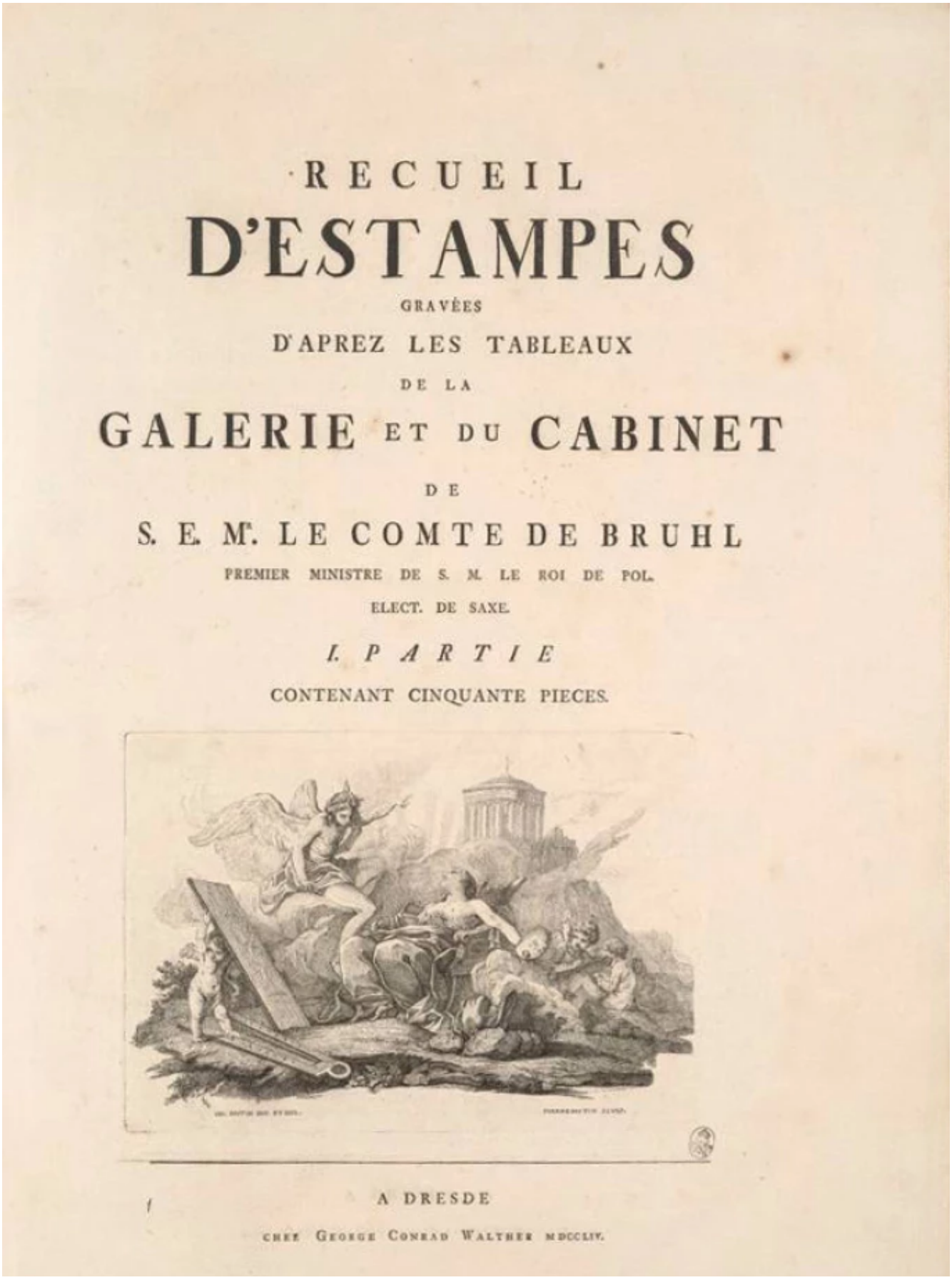

FIG. 3. FRONTISPIECE OF THE *RECUEIL D'ESTAMPES GRAVÉES D'APREZ LES TABLEAUX DE LA GALLERIE & CABINET DE S.E. MR. LE COMTE DE BRÜHL* […], DRESDEN 1754.

His enormous collection of 850 snuffboxes, however, valued at 377,000 Reichstaler, was sold in individual lots in a succession of auctions held in Leipzig in 1764; some of the buyers were members of the Brühl family, who vied with the royal family, as well as with dealers and collectors, for tokens of their lost inheritance.[2] A third of the snuffboxes were of porcelain from the royal manufactory, which was under Brühl's direction from 1733, allowing him to obtain porcelain on credit and, eventually, for free. Brühl's natural history collection inexplicably included twenty-three Meissen busts: eleven of emperors (fig. 4), two empresses, and ten philosophers; whether these went to the state or to auction is unknown.[3]

FIG. 4. JOHANN JOACHIM KÄNDLER AND PETER REINICKE, BUST OF HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR MATHIAS, CA. 1745-1746. MEISSEN PORCELAIN. (FORMERLY PROPERTY OF HENRY ARNHOLD)

Remarkably, there is no archival evidence for the dispersal of Brühl's stunning holdings of Meissen porcelain table-, dessert-, coffee-, tea-, chocolate-, and toilette-services; centerpieces and figural table decorations; candlesticks; flowerpots; potpourri; and vases, as enumerated across 412 entries in chapter XII of the inventory.[4] A part of the "guten großen Tafel Service" (good large table service), as the Allerlei service was labeled in the inventory, was itemized in entry number two and included tureens, serving dishes and "Glocken" (domed warming covers); cruets, butterdishes and saltcellars; ewers and basins; wine bottle stands, decanters and coolers; serving spoons and cutlery handles; coffee and tea wares; candlesticks; and a large centerpiece dominated by a "Blumen Busch" or floral element. A few of the extant plates have a capital "C" on the underside, which has been read as an abbreviation for "Conditorei", indicating they belonged to Brühl's pantry, which was run by his Chef-d'Office, named La Chapelle. This mark would align with the application of "K.H.C." (Königliche Hof Conditorei / Royal Court Pantry) on the underside of some of the porcelains belonging to the King's pantry, albeit this marking effort was short-lived and most of the royal dessert wares and figures, like Brühl's, are unmarked.[5] The inventory does not reference the Prime Minister's other great Meissen service, the so-called Swan Service, which features the arms of the Count and his wife, Maria Anna Fransizka von Kolowrat-Krakowska (1717-1762), who were married in 1734.

FIG. 5. JOHANN JOACHIM KÄNDLER ET AL, THE TRIUMPH OF AMPHITRITE, CA. 1745-1746. MEISSEN PORCELAIN. (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON, NO. 246:1-1870)

Like the Allerlei Service, the Swan Service is amply documented in the manufactory work reports during production yet absent of notice after it entered Brühl's possession. Indeed, any eyewitness accounts of the Prime Minister's banquets do not extend to the decoration of the Meissen tablewares, which might have allowed us to understand if one service or the other was used. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, British envoy to the court of August III from 1747-

1749, for example, described only the appearance of a Meissen centerpiece when he wrote to Henry Fox in 1748:

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***“I was once at a Dinner where we sat down at one table, two hundred six People (‘twas at Count Brühl’s). When the dessert was set on, I thought it was the most wonderful thing I ever beheld. I fancy’d myself either in a Garden or at the Opera, but I could not imagine that I was at Dinner. In the middle of the Table was the Fountain of the Piazza Navona in Rome, at least eight foot high, which ran all the while with Rose-water, and ‘tis said that this Piece alone cost six thousand Thalers.”[6]***

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A similar table was set in the Prime Minister’s painting gallery on January 11, 1747, when he hosted a dinner for 160 persons to celebrate the marriage by proxy of Marie-Josephe to the Dauphin:

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***“The centrepiece for the dessert made everyone marvel, because of its novelty. It represented the most precious garden in which all the elements were made of porcelain. In the middle one saw, copied in the finest white porcelain, the excellent cascade, called the Triumph of Amphitrite, which stands in Count Brühl’s garden.”***

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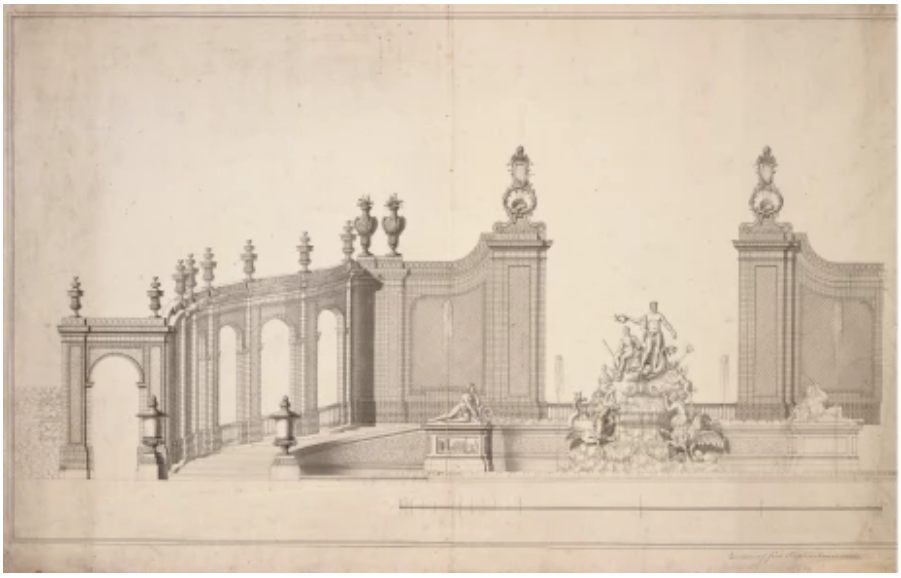

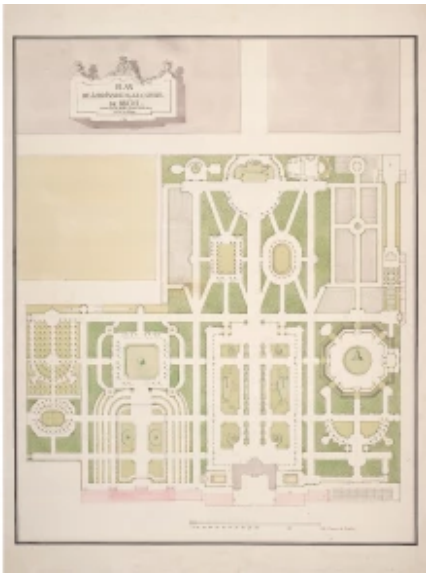

LEFT: FIG. 6. UNKNOWN ARTIST, ELEVATION OF THE NEPTUNE FOUNTAIN IN THE BRÜHL GARDENS IN DRESDEN-FRIEDRICHSTADT, CA. 1744. LANDESAMT FÜR DENKMALPFLEGE SACHSEN (LFDS), PLANSAMMLUNG, INV.-NR. 1971/673

RIGHT: FIG. 7. JOHANN CHRISTOPH KNÖFFEL, PLAN OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S GARDENS IN DRESDEN-FRIEDRICHSTADT, 1752. (NATIONAL MUSEUM WARSAW, KOLLEKTION NIEOROW, INV.-NR. NB 3409)

That particular Meissen centerpiece was listed in the 1764 inventory, also in a lost pantry inventory of 1753; what has survived belongs to the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 5). A miniature version of the grandiose fountain designed by Zacharias Longuelune as the focal point of the gardens at Brühl's palace in Dresden-Friedrichstadt, and sculptured by Lorenzo Mattielli in 1743-1746, its significance is signaled by the appearance of the garden feature in the background of Giambattista Tiepolo's *Empire of Flora*, which was presented to Brühl in 1743 (figs. 6-8).[7]

FIG. 8. GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO, THE EMPIRE OF FLORA, CA. 1743. OIL ON CANVAS. (DE YOUNG AND LEGION OF HONOR, SAN FRANCISCO, 61.44.19)

The Swan and Allerlei services were each comprised of around 2000 pieces, including a Plat de Menage, and could serve perhaps twenty-to-thirty diners. Doubtless the minister's growing collection of monumental porcelain centerpieces and small figures were deployed as needed for the formal dinners and desserts he regularly hosted; royal and ministerial banquet tables often had an aspect of the garden in which the events were sometimes staged (fig. 9). The posthumous inventory indicates that he owned at least eleven large and small Meissen table services altogether. At present, fewer than 350 examples of the Allerlei Service are known.[8]

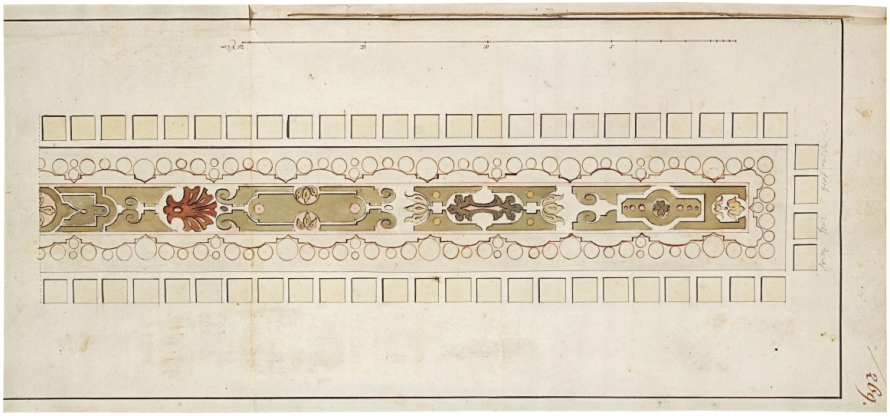

FIG. 9. PLAN FOR THE KING'S TABLE IN DRESDEN IN FEBRUARY 1728, DURING THE VISIT THE KING OF PRUSSIA. (SÄCHSISCHES HAUPSTAATSARCHIV DRESDEN, 10006 OBERHOFMARSCHALLAMT, LOC. F, NR. 21A, FOL. 269)

Another Englishman, Thomas Nugent, in Dresden in 1756, shortly before the outbreak of the Seven Years War, gives us an impression of the Prime Minister's primary residence overlooking the Elbe, which was leveled by the Prussians in 1759 (fig. 10 and 11):

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***"The palace of count Bruhl, the present prime minister, has been built at several different times. The apartments are elegant and richly furnished, but not many of them magnificent; they have lustres of porcelain in beautiful figures; the tables are set off with various tea equipages, and figures of men and women, birds and beasts of porcelain. The drawing-room is empannelled with looking-glasses, adorned with rich paintings, and his cabinet furnished with enamels and crayons. The house and the gardens belonging to it are situated on the Elbe, near the bridge, and command a pleasant prospect. His library, which is in the garden, is 220 feet long, and well furnished with books. But the most striking object is the gallery of pictures, which tho' not containing a fourth part so many as the royal gallery, is incomparably more magnificent, pictures are set off to great advantage, being ranged only on one side, and the windows fronting them very lofty. The panels between the casements are of looking-glass, against which are placed busts and statues, that have a very grand effect."***

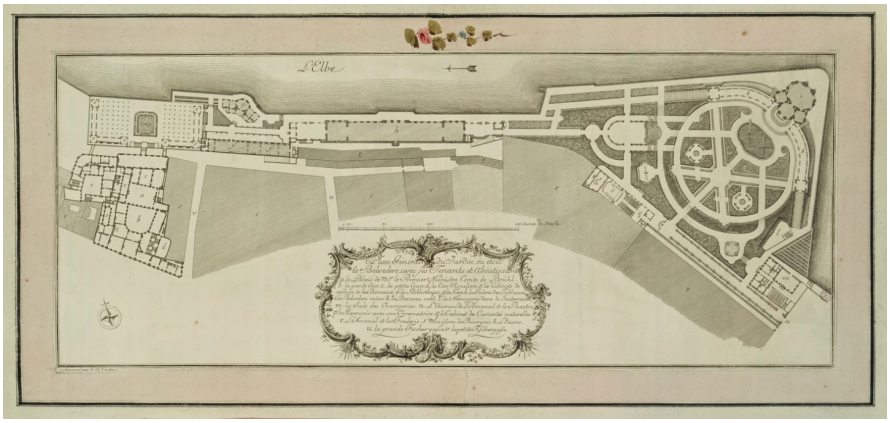
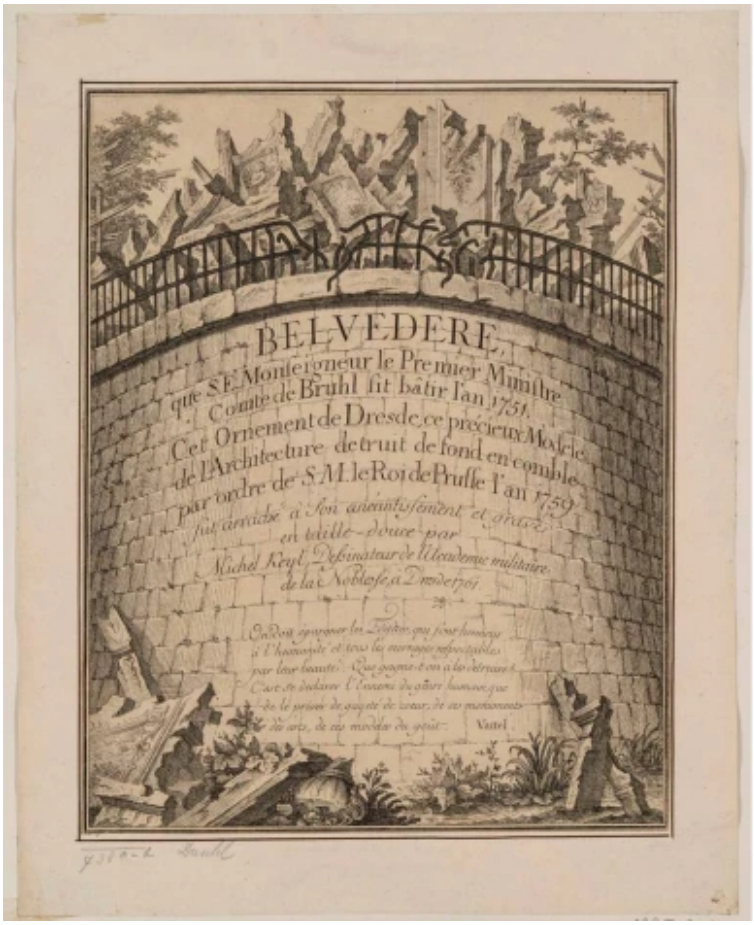
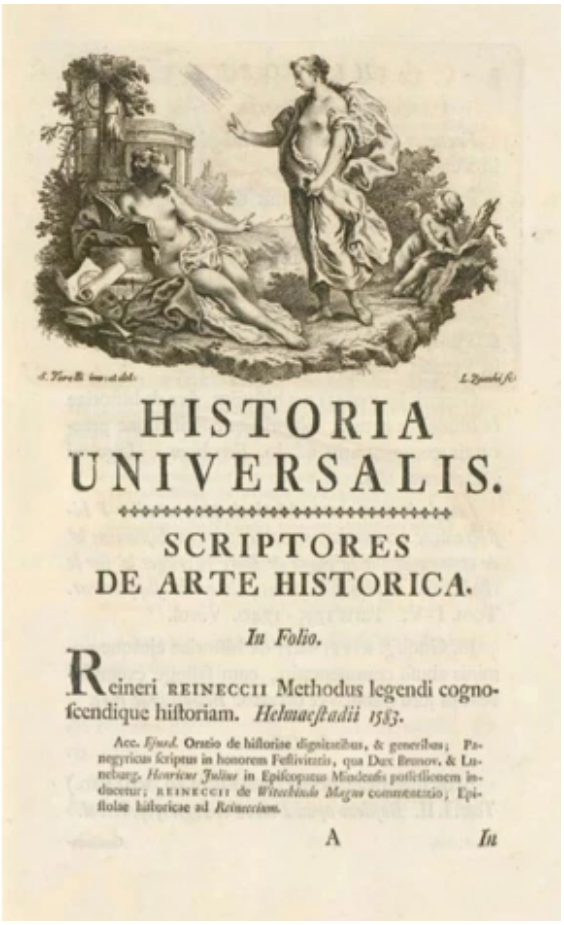


FIG. 10. MICHAEL KEYL AFTER CHRISTIAN AMBROSIUS ENCKE, PLAN OF THE BRÜHL PALACE AND GARDENS, 1761. ENGRAVING.

The Count's library, comprised of over 42,000 volumes, amassed quickly and at great expense, and catalogued for publication (fig. 12), albeit only four volumes appeared in 1750-1756, retained its legendary status well into the 1780s, according to John Moore's account of his visit to the gardens of the late Prime Minister's ruined former residence, published in 1786:




LEFT: FIG. 11. MICHAEL KEYL AFTER CHRISTIAN AMBROSIUS ENCKE, TITLEPLATE PRESENTING

THE BELVEDERE OF THE BRÜHL PALACE AND GARDENS FOLLOWING THEIR DESTRUCTIONS BY PRUSSIAN FORCES IN 1759, 1761. ENGRAVING.

RIGHT: FIG. 12. JOHANN CHRISTOPH ROST, CATALOGUS BIBLIOTHECAE BRÜHLIANAE, VOL. 1, P. 1, 1750.

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***"Our morning walk is in the gardens of the late Count Brühl, situated on the high banks of the Elbe. Nothing can be imagined more delightful than the view from the lofty terrace in these gardens. The Count's magnificent house is now stript of many of its greatest ornaments. The fine collection of paintings has been sold to the Empress of Russia for 150,000 rixdollars. The library, which is in the garden, is two-hundred and twenty feet long. I am not certain, whether it is absolutely necessary to have so large a room for containing this nobleman's books; but it must have required one of that size at least for his wardrobe, if the account that is given of it be just. They tell us, that the Count had at least three hundred different suits of clothes; each of these had a duplicate, as he always shifted his clothes after dinner, and did not choose that his dress should appear different in the afternoon from what it had been in the morning. A painting of each suit, with the particular cane and snuff-box belonging to it, was very accurately drawn in a large book, which was presented to his Excellency every morning by his Valet de Chambre, that he might fix upon the dress in which he wished to appear for the day. This minister is accused of having accumulated a great fortune. The reverse of this, however, is true. His house and gardens belong now to the Elector."***

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Amid a harsh portrayal of the man, the author of the entry for Brühl in *Brockhaus Conversations-Lexikon* (1809) denounced his extravagant ways while acknowledging his enviable collections and library:

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*“Seine Bedienten beliesen sich wenigstens auf 200 Personen, die, wenn sie einige Jahre gedient hatten, auf die einträglichsten Aemter Anspruch machen konnten; seine Tafel, nur bei kleinen Tractamenten wenigstens aus 50 Schüsseln bestehend, kostete ungeheure Summen; ebenso seine Kleidung. Seine Schuhe wurden zu hundert Paaren auf einmal aus Paris verschrieben; ja sogar Pasteten ließ er von dort mit der Post kommen! Außer dieser Verschwendung kaufte er in Sachsen und Polen die ansehnlichsten Güter, schaffte sich eine kostbare Bibliothek, ein Kunst- und Mineraliencabinet, Gallerien von theuren Gemälden &c.”*

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Hanbury Williams made similar observations:

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*“Count Brühl in his figure has still a great deal of the Page, which neither Diamands nor Embroidery can efface. He is extreamly [sic] polite and civil, but his civility destroys the merit of it. His Vanity is beyond all Bounds, and his Expense has no limits, neither does the King of Poland set any limit to it, for He permits him to take whatever He pleases out of the Revenues of Saxony. His house is a Palace, and His family is a Court. He has every Vice and Expense that wou’d each of them singly undo any other Person. […] As to his Equipage, he keeps a hundred and fifty servants in Livery and very near as many out of Livery, and he has never less than three hundred Horses in his stable. His Library into which He never goes consists of about three Score thousand Volumes of well chosen Books of the best Editions, and he has another Chamber near it of some hundreds of Volumes of the finest and most scarce Prints. His Gallery of Pictures is three hundred foot long and entirely cover’d with Paintings, which he has at great Expense collected from all parts of Europe.”*

**Unraveling the Allerlei Service**

Johanna Lessmann was the first to begin to unravel the history of the long-overlooked Allerlei Service, publishing the results of her groundbreaking study in 2000.[9] This was followed by the master's thesis of Thomas Miltschus in 2004 and one final analysis by Claudia Bodinek which appeared in 2017.[10] Bodinek found evidence for the use of the term "Allerlei" at the Meissen manufactory in 1770-1810, in the inventory of the plaster molds, though it was not until the modern era that the moniker crept slowly into common usage, first in a Lepke sale catalogue from 1937, then in W.B. Honey's 1946 American edition of his popular Meissen history, *Dresden China,* and eventually in a 1973 Sotheby's sale catalogue, where the entry even noted that Munich-based Meissen scholar Rainer Rückert had overlooked the service entirely in his groundbreaking 1966 exhibition. The term "Allerlei", an adjective which in translation means 'all kinds of things', or 'a bit of everything', is found in eighteenth-century German cookbooks aimed at aristocratic and princely households, in the titles of recipes for soups or savory liquids for the first course of a state banquet, for example "Potage Allerey" or "Potage von Allerley", thus a blend of French and German words for what is essentially an olio. Given the range of flowers, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, herbs, spices and nuts that decorate the vast array of known tablewares, it's no wonder the service earned the "Allerlei" label. Honey mentioned the Allerlei pattern only in passing, in a nod to silver table services as likely sources for the molded Meissen borders of the Ozier (basketweave) pattern introduced ca. 1732 and for the Gotzkowsky and Allerlei patterns of the 1740s:

"[…] the most elaborate and interesting plastic decoration on the more ordinary table-wares is to be found in the relief borders of plates […] Such borders were perhaps suggested by silver, but were a novelty in ceramic decoration."

By extension, many of the shapes for the great Meissen table services likewise derive from German or French silver.

Brühl's predecessor, Alexander Joseph (1695-1762), Count Sulkowski, commissioned the first Meissen table service for ministerial use in 1735, which boldly took its cue from the

royal silver tablewares produced in Augsburg for Augustus the Strong.[11] For reasons of protocol, the Electoral Princes of Saxony who were Kings of Poland dined from silver or silver-gilt, while Meissen porcelain, made from the earth of the realm, and thereby emblematic of the king, was more suitable for the ministerial tables and for diplomatic gifts. Sulkowski's savory chef, Franz Wolff, went to the manufactory on occasion, to liaise and advise, and the King's silver tureen was even transported to Meissen for copying in porcelain. Doubtless Brühl maintained the same level of interest and involvement in the design and production of the Swan Service (ca. 1736-1741), likewise delegating members of his household to travel back-and-forth between Dresden and Meissen, to oversee the commission and report back. In this instance, the inspiration was not Augsburg silver but French rococo silver and sugar sculpture, as communicated by drawings and prints, not to mention by Brühl's own French silver, and the sugarwork artistry of his devoted French Chef-d'Office, La Chapelle, who visited the manufactory regularly from 1737-1740.[12] Brühl's Kellermeister (master of the cellar), Silberdiener (master of the silver), his gardener and other members of his household came as well. Certainly, the resulting porcelain extravaganza was meant to be a self-aggrandizing tabletop representation of the minister's erudition and achievements, manifested otherwise in the architecture, collections, library and gardens of his city and suburban palaces in Dresden and, eventually, his residences in Poland. It is unsurprising, therefore, to find him commissioning a Meissen version of the Mattielli fountain for use during the three royal weddings in 1747. A similar cascade was later erected at the Brühl palace in Pförten.

FIG. 13. JOHANN JAKOB HAID AFTER BAUMGARTNER, FRONTISPIECE TO JOHANN WILHELM WEINMANN, PHYTANTHOZA ICONOGRAPHIA, VOL. 1, 1737. MEZZOTINT

The Allerlei Service was commissioned on the heels of the Swan Service, in 1742, at a moment when several porcelain table services were underway as diplomatic gifts for the Empress of Russia; Clemens August, Prince-Bishop of Cologna; Adam Götzendorf-Grabowski, Prince-Bishop of Warmia; the King of Denmark; Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams;

and several individuals in France, in relation to the marriage of Marie-Josephe to the Dauphin in 1747. Naturally this resulted in delays to the Allerlei Service, not to mention the occasional sharing or borrowing of forms and motifs, notably of botanical illustrations from Johann Weinmann's *Phytanthoza Iconographia* (1737-1745) (fig. 13).

FIG. 14. PENTHIÈVRE-ORLÉANS SERVICE. A LOUIS XV ROYAL SILVER TUREEN, COVER, LINER AND STAND, THOMAS GERMAIN, PARIS, 1733-3, SOTHEBY'S NEW YORK, *ROYAL FRENCH SILVER: THE PROPERTY OF GEORGE ORTIZ*, NOVEMBER 13TH, 1996, LOT 3.

Certainly, the Second Silesian War in 1744-1745 was an interruption as well. Brühl was also in pursuit of a French silver service during this time, and even placed an order with Claude Ballin before learning about the availability of a service by Thomas Germain. The Germain service included a tureen like that sold at Sotheby's in 1996 from the Penthièvre-Orléans service (fig. 14).

In the inventory taken after the Prime Minister's death, in the chapter for silver, a French silver service is indicated, which went to his heirs. This service included two tureens with liners, one with an artichoke on the lid and the other with a cauliflower, sculptural features which correspond to the vegetable handles of the Allerlei Service tureens.[13] Whether the Meissen Allerlei openwork bottle holder mimics models in silver is unknown, though the

elongated shape was meant to accommodate the flattened bottles (“Bocksbeutel”) that were used for the wines from the Franconian region of Germany, as were inventoried in Brühl’s wine cellar at his death (fig. 15).[14]

FIG. 15. SO-CALLED BOCKSBEUTEL (FLATTENED WINE BOTTLE) FOR FRANCONIAN WINES.

Given the Prime Minister’s obvious interest in natural history, as demonstrated by his famous collection of specimens that was partly acquired by the state, and the fact of his great formal gardens in Dresden and beyond, there is the likelihood that the Prime Minister’s library included books devoted to the natural sciences. Yet the two editions of Weinmann in the

Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek (SLUB), the modern repository of the royal library, cannot be traced to Brühl's library, albeit there have been losses to the core collection over time and a reconstruction of his original library is wanting. The minister's copy of Vincent La Chapelle's five-volume *Le Cuisinier moderne* (fig. 16*)*, however, has survived in the SLUB, which begs the question: was Vincent La Chapelle related to Brühl's Chef-d'Office named La Chapelle, notwithstanding that *Le Cuisinier moderne* was a courtly cookbook, with menus, recipes, and table plans for fifteen to sixty diners, and not a dessert manual? Given the existence of this title in Brühl's library, it seems likely that he owned a number of cookbooks and courtesy manuals geared to the household of a person of rank.

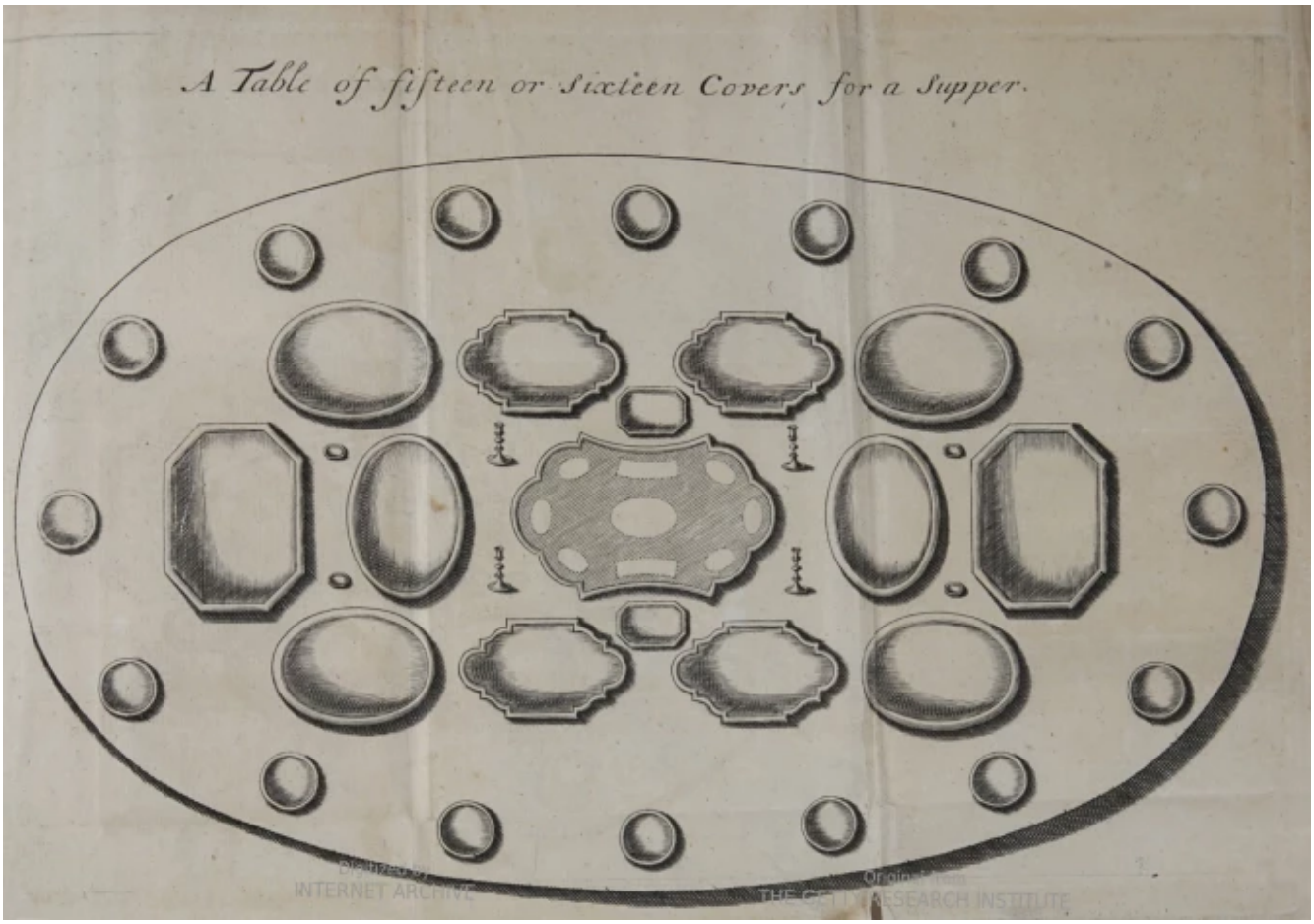


FIG. 16. PLATE WITH A TABLE SET FOR 15 OR 16 DINERS, IN VINCENT LA CHAPELLE, *THE MODERNE COOK*, VOL. 1.

Weinmann was published in installments over several years, from 1737 to 1745, and arrived at the Meissen manufactory accordingly, in stages.[15] The complete edition has over 1000 plates and illustrates thousands of specimens, with lengthy accompanying texts. Prints were

routinely acquired as design resources for the painting and modeling studios[16]; how Weinmann became the essential pattern book for the Allerlei Service is not known, nor is there any clarity about who devised the overall artistic program and structured the imagery from piece to piece. Heretofore, efforts have been made by porcelain specialists to match the painted fruits, flowers, and vegetables to the illustrations in Weinmann, among other sources, without investigating why these were chosen. One wonders if there was intention and meaning in the selected specimens, and if so, did this reflect the influence of the chefs, or the gardeners, or the minister himself? Were these, after all, the ingredients for an Allerlei soup? Or was the choice rather random, based upon visual interest, color, and form? Of course, Weinmann was not purchased for the Allerlei Service commission, and was a source for the decoration of the other services produced around the same time.

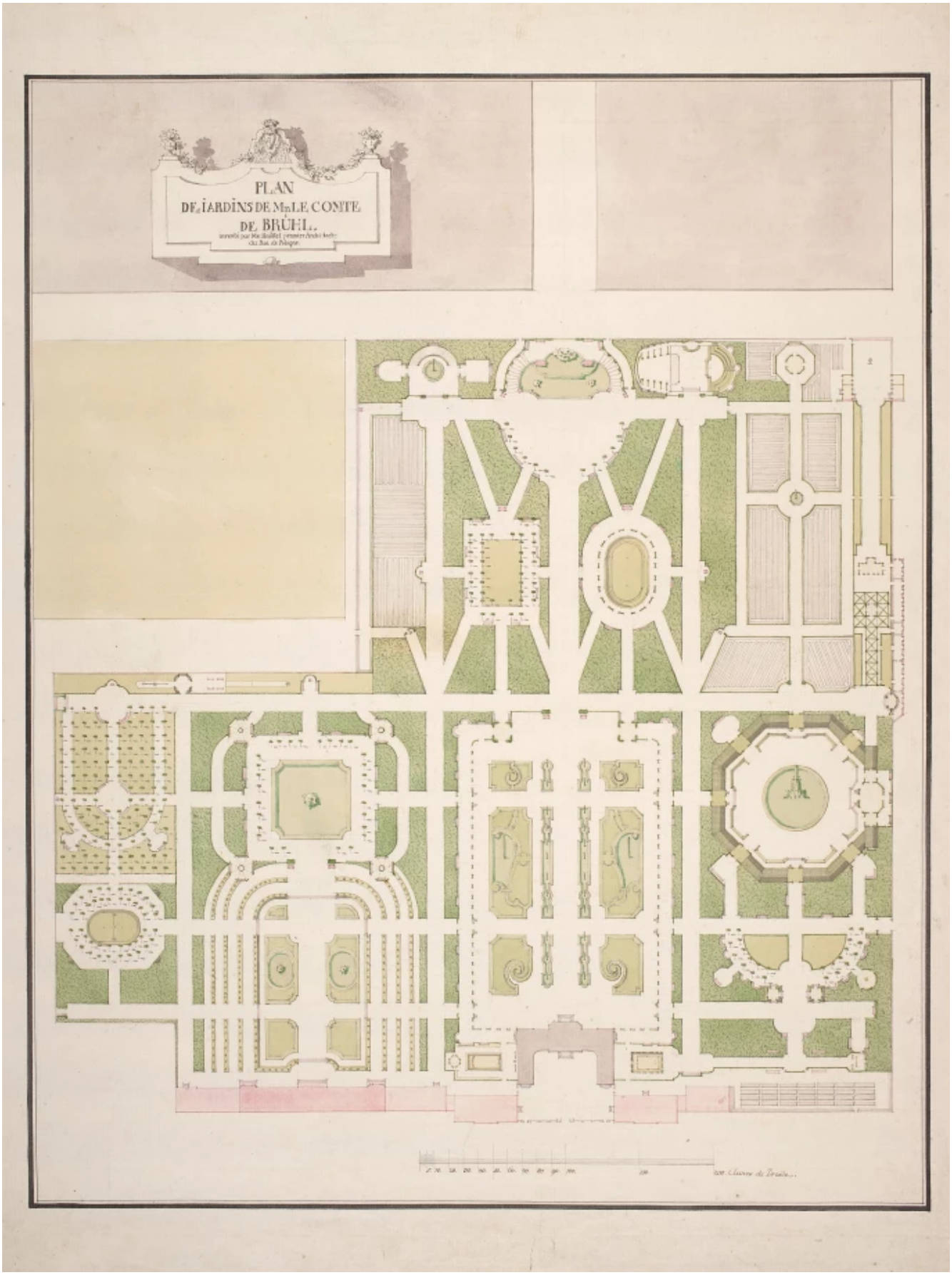


FIG. 17. JOHANN CHRISTOPH KNÖPFFEL, THE PRIME MINISTER'S GARDEN IN NISCHWITZ, POLAND, CA. 1750. LFDS, PLANSAMMLUNG, INV.-NR. M 36. II. BL. 1

# Jardinier de parterre. Künſt ũ: Blümen Gärtner.

1. *Roſes rouges et blanches.* 1. Roth ũ: weiße Roſen. 2. *pie d'oeillets.* 2. Nelckhenſtockh 3. *narciſſes.* 3. Narzißen 4. *lis blancs.* 4. Weiße Lilien. 5. *Jacinte.* 5. gelber Stern. 6. *perce neige.* 6. ſchnee ballen 7. *fleur Stomacal* 7. Öhlmagen. 8 *une tulipe fleurie* 8. eine offne Tülipan. 9. *Monſtreuse.* 9. große Monſtrosa d.o 10. *une Pionne.* 10. Beonien Roſen. 11. *Tulipe.* 11. Tülipan. 12. *Marguerites fleuries.* 12. Margranten Bluth. 13. *coquelicoq.* 13. Klaproſen. 14. *Laurier.* 14. Lorber Blätter. 15. *uniſſoir.* 15. eine Britſche. 16. *rateau.* 16. ein Rechen 17. *Sarcloir.* 17. ein ſtoßeiſen den weg zũ bützen. 18. *Ciseaux.* 18. ein Gartenſcher. 19. *Serpettes.* 19. ein Reben meßer. 20. *pivot à tirer au cordeau.* 20. die eiſerne Spitzen zũ der Schnũer. 21. *Oranger.* 21. Pomeranzen-

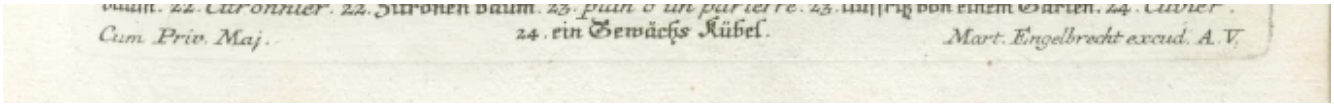


FIG. 18. UNKNOWN ARTIST, A GARDENER, CA. 1719. HAND-COLORED ENGRAVING. (KUPFERSTICH-KABINETT, DRESDEN, B 1884,2, PL. 49)

Like the King, Brühl employed plantsmen to maintain the gardens at his two Dresden palaces and, eventually, and his Polish residences in Pförten, Wola, Warsaw and Nischwitz (fig. 17). The head gardener in Dresden was named Möller (also Moeller). The head gardeners in Poland were Johann Jakob Mencke and Johann Gottlieb Ulrich; Mencke worked also for the King in Warsaw until around 1748. By contrast, the King employed a dozen head gardeners in Saxony, one for each royal palace in Dresden, Moritzburg, Großsedlitz, Pretzsch, Hubertusburg, Lichtenburg and Elsterwerda (fig. 18); they are named in the annual court calendar, the *Königlich-Polnischer und Churfürstlich-Sächsischer Hoff- und Staats-Calender*. The royal head gardener in Warsaw was, at one point, Gottfried Paul Thörl.

An inventory of the Dresden orangerie known as the Zwinger (Fig. 19), taken after the close of the Seven Years War, lists more than 1000 orange trees, 434 laurels, 1 olive tree, 35 myrtles, 14 cedars, 36 cyprus, 10 aloes, 12 pomegranates, 8 oleander, 24 coffee trees, fig trees, and a variety of potted plants such as jasmine, rosemary, yucca, and portulaca.[17]

FIG. 19. L'ORANGERIE ROYALE DE DRESDEN (1729), FRONTISPIECE.

There are unfortunately no such inventories for Brühl's gardens, but there are plans (figs. 7, 10, 17) and, remarkably, the Prime Minister's account books survive for the years 1752-1761.[18] These record payments for a model of the cascade for Pförten in 1752[19]; to Möller

for 110 boxwoods for the Friedrichstadt palace, espalier work and other gardening, also the purchase of 100 orange trees for Pförten in 1753; to La Chapelle for his journeys to and from Pförten in 1754, to prepare for the King's visits on his way to and from Warsaw; to Möller for porcelain cups for the Friedrichstadt guardhouse during the Prussian occupation in 1756; to Möller for 100 trees to be packed in Leipzig and transported to Poland in 1757; and for 60 orange tubs in 1761. Elsewhere in the archives, there is evidence for the importation of specimen trees and exotics from Italy.

**The Meissen 'Brühl'sche Allerlei' Service: An Important Portion of the Meissen Service made for Heinrich Graf von Brühl (1700-63), Circa 1742-46**
Estimate: 120,000 – 180,000 USD

**Conclusion**

The astonishingly varied and alluring Bruhlsche Allerlei Service was more or less hiding in plain sight for nearly 250 years, until Johanna Lessmann's groundbreaking study published in 2000. Notwithstanding more recent scholarship, there is much yet to discover. It is hoped that historians in other disciplines, notably historians of silver, food, gardening and plants, will take an interest in this remarkable Meissen masterpiece, to help bring its origins, artistic program and function further into the light.

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[1] For background, see the various essays in Ute Koch and Cristina Ruggero (eds.), *Heinrich*

*Graf von Brühl (1700-1763) Ein sächsischer Mäzen in Europa* (Dresde, 2017). Also Ulrich Pietsch (ed.), *Schwanenservice / Meissener Porzellan für Graf von Brühl* (Dresden, 2000).

[2] See Ute Koch, Count Brühl and his Collection of Porcelain Boxes in Tessa Murdoch and Heike Zech (eds.), *Going for Gold. Craftsmanship and Collecting of Gold Boxes* (Eastbourne/Chicago, 2014), pp. 184-194.

[3] It is presumed the two French porcelain chandeliers inventoried among the Meissen were similarly treated. For more on the Meissen emperor busts, see Johanna Lessmann, *Meissen Porcelain for the Imperial Court in Vienna in Fragile Diplomacy: Meissen Porcelain for European Courts, ca. 1710-63* (New York/London, 2007), pp. 110-139.

[4] See *Schwanenservice* (note 1); also Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, 10079 Landesregierung, Loc. 30488. Some of these items, namely the Meissen service with "mit dem Aste" (with the [blue] branch), which is recognizable today, and countless porcelain figural table decorations, also appear in two inventories of the Prime Minister's pantry taken in 1753. The 1764 inventory indicates a Japanese porcelain service as well.

[5] For more on the court pantry and the marking system, see Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, The Königliche Hof-Conditorei Hubertusburg in Martin Schuster et al., *Schloss Hubertusburg* (Arbeitshefte des Landesamtes für Denkmalpflege Sachsen, 2022), vol. 1, pp. 440-511.

[6] It's possible this was one of the centerpieces captured in an album in the Kupferstich-Kabinet, Dresden State Museums; see Cassidy-Geiger, The Königliche Hof-Conditorei (note 5), Appendix 3, pp. 483-490.

[7] The fountain survives in Dresden today; for more, see Reino Liefke, The *Triumph of Amphitrite*: The Resurrection of Count Brühl's Lost Table Fountain at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in Koch and Ruggero (note 1).

[8] Many of these pieces are in Russia today, which might point to the acquisition of the Allerlei Service by Catherine the Great; if so, perhaps parts of the service were sold by the Soviet State in the period ca. 1928-1933 (for more, see Robert C. Williams, Dumping Oils: Soviet Art Sales and Soviet-American Relations 1928-1933, *Kennan Institute Occasional*

*Paper Series* #30, 1977.)

[9] Johanna Lessmann, Das "Brühlsche Allerlei" – Ein Service für Heinrich Graf von Brühl in *Schwanenservice* (note 1), pp. 106-118.

[10] Thomas Miltschus, Das "Brühlsche Allerlei". Ein Tafelservice der Königlichen Porzellanmanufaktur Meissen der 1740er Jahre (unpublished MA thesis, Leipzig, 2004); Claudia Bodinek, Ein Meissener Porzellanservice für den Gräfen – Das Brühl'sche Allerlei in *KERAMOS*, pp. 3-134.

[11] Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, Innovations and the Ceremonial Table in Saxony 1719-1747 in Peter-Michael Hahn and Ulrich Schütte (eds.): *Zeichen und Raum. Ausstattungen und höfisches Zeremoniell in den deutschen Schlössern der Frühen Neuzeit* (Rudolstädter Forschungen zur Residenzkultur 3; München/Berlin 2006), pp. 135-162.

[12] Safeguarding the Royal Porcelain Manufactory in the Albrechtsburg castle at Meissen: the Guardhouse Logbooks, 1731-40 in *KERAMOS* 218 (2013), pp. 3-174. [13] The influence of the silver designs of Juste-Aurèle Meissonier is evident in the Swan Service. For more, see Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, Ein neues silbern Französisches Tafel Service: Linking the Penthièvre-Orléans service to Dresden in *Silver Studies*: *The Journal of the Silver Society* (2007), pp. 123-154. See as well Cassidy-Geiger, A lemon tree for the Prime Minister's table? Two drawings in Dresden for a silver centerpiece for Heinrich, Count von Brühl in *Silver Studies: The Journal of the Silver Society* (Nr. 22, 2015), pp. 29-30.

[14] The listing of wines in the cellar in chapter XXV of the inventory extended to 540 entries and included Franconian wines, Tokay, French and Italian wines, and fruit liquers (Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, 10079 Landesregierung, Loc. 30488).

[15] For background, see Jürgen Schärer, *Verschieden außerordentlich feine Mahlerey und vergoldete Geschirre, die jederzeit ihren Liebhaber gefunden* (Meissen, 1996), pp. 219-220.

[16] Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, Graphic Sources for Meissen Porcelain : The Print Collection in the Meissen Archives in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Journal* (nr. 31, 1996), pp. 99-126;

also Claudia Bodinek, *Raffinesse im Akkord: Meissener Porzellanmalerei und ihre grafischen Vorlagen* (Petersberg, 2018).

[17] Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, 10010 Hausmarschallamt, Nr. 187; further inventories exist for the royal gardens in Dresden, for example for 1734 (Nr. 241; 282) and for 1736 (Nr. 283).

[18] Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, 10026 Geheimes Kabinett, Loc. 1402/1 - 1402/16.

[19] If a wooden model for the cascade in Dresden was made, there is the possibility it was lent to the Meissen manufactory for copying in porcelain.

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## About the Author

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